

JUL 15 1965

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Telegrams:  
HARPENDEN 4671

11th July 1965

Dear Lederberg,

I very much enjoyed your article "Signs of Life" in Nature last week and hope you will send me a reprint.

It was particularly valuable to have the inadequacy of our methods of measuring optical activity stressed. I have been nagging physicists about this for years and hope you will be more successful in getting them interested than I have been.

Apropos of the exclusion of so many possible amino acids from proteins, eg  $\alpha$  amino butyric acid as you say, has anyone ever tried making polymers from them? Doty made polymers from mixtures of D and L normal amino acids and found the mixed ones less stable than those that were stereo-homogeneous. Someone should be encouraged to make all-L polymers of single non-protein amino acids or mixtures of them to see if there is anything unusual about their properties. I suspect there wont be and that their exclusion is just a matter of biological tradition here. But it would be interesting to know.

Yours sincerely

*Bill Pirie*

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